



Talk to children about crisis events

When parents and caregivers or other family members deal with crisis situations calmly and confidently, children feel more confident and secure. A child's reactions are influenced by the behavior they see. The better prepared you are, the more reassuring you may be during an emergency. This can help children cope.

Before a crisis event

- **Get informed.** Know what hazards are in your area. Know evacuation routes and disaster plans where you and your family spend time.
- **Develop a family disaster plan.** Being prepared can help the whole family cope better and have a greater sense of control.
- **Assemble a disaster supply kit.** This kit can help your family stay safe and be more comfortable during and after a crisis event.

During and after a crisis event

- **Show understanding.** After a crisis, children are most afraid that the event will happen again, someone close to them will be killed or hurt or that they will be left alone or separated from their family. You can help them by:
 - Sharing facts with them about the event and plans to keep them safe.
 - Encouraging them to talk or express what they are feeling.
 - Listening to their concerns.
 - Giving them specific tasks to do. This lets them know they can help and can restore a sense of control.
 - Spending extra time with them.
 - Re-establishing daily routines.
 - Understanding that children have different reactions to crisis events based on their maturity, age and experience.
 - Knowing when and how to get help for a child who continues to suffer.
- **Monitor and limit your family's exposure to the media.** The news can bring out fear and confusion among children and adults. Watching images over and over can cause younger children to believe the event is happening again and again. Parents and caregivers might want to talk about what is being shown on TV with them.
- **Use support networks.** Parents and caregivers are almost always the best source of support for their children in difficult times. It is important for adults to understand their own feelings to manage their reactions better. Adults in control of their feelings are better able to support their children.

Information adapted from the American Red Cross